

# Newport libraries rate high

- Local library system receives the highest ranking for its size in California in a new nationwide survey.

By Elia Powers, Daily Pilot, 10/19/05

Newport Beach bookworms are some of the best served in the state, according to a recent library ranking.

For its population size -- 50,000 to 99,999 residents -- the Newport Beach Public Library system received the highest ranking in California by the Hennen's American Public Library Rankings. The survey measures 15 categories, including circulation, staffing, resources and funding levels.

"We were pleased with the results," said Susan Warren, library services manager for the Newport Beach libraries. "We're very proud to receive the ranking and the recognition."

More than 9,000 public libraries are surveyed annually and grouped by community population. There are 45 California public library systems in Newport Beach's population category.

Three library systems from Ohio took top national honors among cities with up to 99,999 residents.

Warren, who works under Library Director Linda Katsouleas and manages day-to-day operations, said the high ranking is a testament to community giving.

"I'm most proud of the people who work in the bookstore and thankful for the foundations that support us throughout the year," Warren said.

Over a 12-month period ending in August, the two major library support groups donated nearly \$800,000, Warren said. The Newport Beach Public Library Foundation gave more than \$400,000, and the Friends of the Library added about \$380,000.

The groups' donations primarily went toward boosting children's services and funding technology offerings. This summer, the library became one of a handful in the country to lend iPod Shuffle digital audio players that have books on tape stored on them.

The library also offers Wi-Fi Internet service at each of its four locations -- Newport Beach Central Library, Mariners Branch Library, Balboa Branch Library and Corona del Mar Branch Library.

"It's all a tribute to our supporters who have given and to the support of the city and staff," said Thomas Edwards, who heads the Newport Beach Public Library Foundation. "On the weekends, you notice people from the surrounding communities using our facilities."

Warren said a few numbers illustrate the extent of the local library system's resources. In the fiscal year that ended June 30, the system had a budget of about \$4.9 million.

The four libraries combined to circulate more than 1.4 million items and to answer about 160,000 reference questions during the last fiscal year.

While the average library of its size surveyed had approximately five public Internet terminals per 10,000 residents, the Newport Beach public libraries offer a ratio of more than eight terminals per 10,000 residents.

The results of the library survey appeared in the October issue of the American Library Association's magazine.

This is the seventh year that Thomas Hennen Jr., a librarian and library consultant from Wisconsin, has evaluated the nation's public libraries with the HAPLR index.

The complete list of library scores can be found at [www.haplr-index.com](http://www.haplr-index.com).